28: Spiro--81 [3] (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 626, 848, 581 Ifalik

"Aside from the offspring of incestuous unions, there is no native concept of illegitimacy. The children of unmarried sweethearts (gamar) are evaluated no differently from those of married couples. The natives point out that they desire babies, that they love them, that they are necessary to replenish the population, and what difference, therefore, does it make whether they are born to married couples or to sweethearts. Thus the native name for an infant, sauwau for a girl, ligau for a boy, is the same whether its parents be married or unmarried.

It is expected, however, that a man will marry his sweetheart should she become pregnant. This is not compulsory, but should he refuse he would be scorned and called a 'very bad man' by all the people."

"In choosing a spouse, both the man and woman (ideally) weigh the economic skills of the future mate. A man who is a poor fisherman or otherwise economically unskilled, a woman who can not cook well or is not adept at making skirts, would be considered a very poor marriage prospect. There is at least one woman in Ifaluk who has never been married because the natives insist she is a 'fool fellow', that is, domestically unskilled, and there have been two cases of divorce for the same reason.

The two desirable features that a person looks for, therefore, is economic skill and sexual attractiveness. But it seems that both desiderata are fairly universally found among all the people for an ecological study of the island of Felarik reveals an interesting phenomenon: Of the sixty-six marriages in the genealogies (the total number of marriages on this island), fifty-five, or more than eighty-three percent were consumated between individuals living in the island. Only eleven individuals married a person from the island of Falalap. And of the fifty-five, sixty-three percent of the total chose mates from within their own districts. This high percentage of local endogamy means that a high percentage of the people marry the girl who lives next door. This has two important implications: It means that all the people of one district are close relatives, either through birth or marriage, partly explains the degree of intimacy, and cooperation that exists between them. And it also means that your spouse may have been your childhood playmate, with whom you have grown up, or a young girl whom you had seen grow from

infancy, whose every character and personality trait you know well, so that you enter into marriage with an intimate knowledge of your mate.

I said above that your spouse is a woman whom you observed grow from infancy, for study reveals that the ages of the mates are often widely separated. When we first arrived in the island, I was struck by the great discrepancy between the number of [132] young men as contrasted to young women.

There were a considerable number of single men, but practically no single women their age, and when I asked Talimera to bring me some tari-veivel to draw for me, he replied that there were none. It was not until many months had passed that I realized my error. I had incorrectly guessed at the ages of the young married women. When I got to know the people, and had obtained information on relative chronological ages, I discovered that the young women, who corresponded in age to the young single men, were all married. Most of the young women marry in early adolescence, whereas the boys do not marry until their early twenties. This means that the girls marry older, often men one generation removed from them. (13)"

"13. This also indicates the precocious maturation of the girl, as compared to the boy. Girls that I had thought were in their early twenties, I later found out to be younger sisters of the young men that I spent my time with. This early maturation continues into old age. Women age much more rapidly than men. Middle aged women look like old women, as compared to their husbands who maintain a very youthful appearance."

28: Spiro--133-134 (1947-48) 1949 Woleaians
116, 581, 462, 831 Ifalik

"When I asked my informants why people marry, I provoked great laughter. The men looked at me with amazement, as if I were incredibly naive, and then Auelimar, [134] the oldest of the men raised his hands towards me, and forming a circle with the forefinger and thumb of his left hand, thrust the forefinger of his left hand into it[sic]--an obvious symbol of intercourse. When the laughter had died away, I pointed out that men and women could have sexual relations without marriage, so there must be other reasons as well for marrying. They replied that if a person did not marry, people would talk about him, implying that the unmarried state is not quite normal. And all would ask him, 'Who will give you chow?' This is a recurrent theme, in the case of both males and females--a spouse is necessary in order to obtain food. In a culture which has a strict sexual division of labor with respect to the production and preparing of food, this factor does assume importance. Yet there seems little doubt that sex is the preeminent reason for marriage, other factors being equal. This is indicated further by the response of my informants to the question as to whether the institution of marriage to inanimate objects is practiced.' Suppose she no alive, what he copulate?', was the immediate response, rather than, 'suppose she no alive who cook for him?'"